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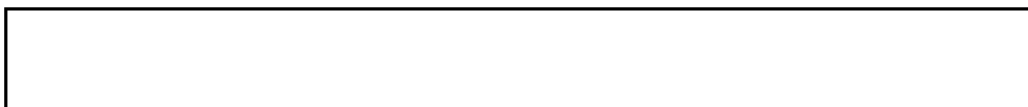
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PORTUGAL

One of the most militant and best armed extreme-left groups in Portugal has challenged the government's new directive aimed at recovering illegal arms. This is the latest in a series of attempts to undercut the government's authority, and it could signal a decisive test of strength for the regime.

A spokesman for the Revolutionary Party of the Proletariat - Revolutionary Brigades said it would ignore the government's order of last Friday giving armed militia groups eight days to hand over illegal weapons. He said that the government lacked the strength to enforce its ban, and added that if there were a confrontation, the government would lose.

The Revolutionary Brigades, a strongly anti-American organization, is led by Isobel do Carmo, a tough, professional revolutionary who reportedly has close ties with security forces chief Otelo de Carvalho. The group was active during the Caetano regime, when it organized successful sabotage raids. In 1971 it set off an explosion in a secret underground NATO base near Lisbon.

This has been the only public reaction to the government's directive so far, but other groups on the extreme left and those supported by the Communist Party can be expected to offer resistance. The spokesman for the Revolutionary Brigades said workers and peasants councils and the neighborhood councils would also refuse to hand over their arms. These councils are groups set up by adherents of the far left in an attempt to destroy Portugal's major political parties.

Meanwhile, over the weekend there was an indication that the recent excesses of the far left and the Communists may be contributing to a shift in popular sentiment to the right.

In Porto on Saturday, 15,000 people attended a rally held by the center-right party, the Social Democratic Center. The rally proceeded without incident, despite appeals by several far-left groups that it be disrupted. Because of the large conservative turnout, leftist militants felt obliged to protect their own headquarters.

Speaking at the rally, Social Democratic Center leaders—including several who have been linked to former president Spínola's plans to return from exile to head a rightist regime—touted the party's growing strength in central and northern Portugal. Although not represented in the present government, party leaders said they were ready to support the government if it could maintain public order and restore military discipline.

The rally on Saturday was in marked contrast to a similar meeting held in January, when leftist demonstrators besieged the conference hall and participants, including several prominent foreign observers, had to be rescued by the military police.

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LEBANON

Sniper fire and kidnappings continued in Beirut over the weekend. Clashes between Christians and Muslims were limited in scope, however, and there were no moves to rebuild the barricades.

The US embassy reported on Saturday that the increase in violence had not seriously dampened the economic resurgence in the capital which began late last week. Most shops and banks were open, and most roads were passable.

The meeting of the political reform subcommittee of the national dialogue committee on Saturday reportedly was marred by deep differences between leftist leader Kamal Jumblatt and Phalangist leader Pierre Jumayyil. The latter is continuing to insist that security must be restored before reform can be discussed. The subcommittee is scheduled to meet again today.

The US defense attache in Beirut reports that poorly concealed arms procurement activities by the Christians have drawn criticism from Jumblatt, who has alleged US and Lebanese government complicity in the deliveries. The attache points out that the Christians have seen their arms sources in Eastern bloc countries all but dry up, and they have been engaged in a frantic scramble to buy Western arms and ammunition to replenish supplies.



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JAPAN-US

The Japanese are widely interpreting the Emperor's recently concluded visit to the US as opening an era of "good feelings" in US-Japanese relations.

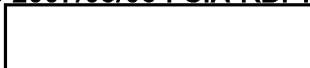
The visit contributed significantly to popular support for continued cooperation with the US and reconfirmed at the highest level the fundamental strength of the bilateral relationship.

Prior to the visit, many Japanese had grave doubts about the image the Emperor would project and about the kind of reception he would receive. The American reception and the coverage by the US media, however, greatly exceeded even the most optimistic Japanese expectations.

The timing of the imperial visit contributed to its success. There are no major problems between the two countries at present, and a series of recent events—including a widely publicized speech by Secretary Kissinger on the importance of US-Japanese relations and a well-received visit by Secretary of Defense Schlesinger—has served to focus Japanese public attention on the strength of the bilateral relationship.

Furthermore, the Japanese media have given broad attention to recent efforts by all opposition parties except the Communists to open avenues of communications with the US. The Japan Socialist Party, the major opposition party, recently sent a delegation to exchange views with US officials—the first such visit in 18 years.

Despite the good feelings, policy differences between Tokyo and Washington—such as certain aspects of the two-Korea policy and international economic problems—will continue. Some of the present euphoria will also eventually subside. Nevertheless, it is clear that Tokyo is now in a position to conduct its relations with the US with but a minimum of sniping from anti-US critics in Japan.



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USSR-FRANCE

At the end of French President Giscard's four-day visit to the Soviet Union, both sides made determined attempts to present an appearance of cordiality and accomplishment, but they could not entirely dispel a sense of strain.

The two leaders signed a brief formal communique and a longer declaration of friendship. In the declaration they spoke of the need to deepen bilateral consultations, but they did not formally change the 1970 Protocol on Consultations. They stressed the importance of summit meetings and agreed to hold them on a "periodic basis," which may go a short distance toward formalizing the annual exchange that now exists.

The French endorsed the Soviet proposal to convene a world disarmament conference, which they probably regarded as a painless gesture. The declaration makes no mention, however, of the European force reduction talks, which the French have refused to join.

The declaration refers in glowing terms to the European security conference, with both sides pledging full implementation of its final act. Another phrase suggests that implementation will be achieved through "bilateral agreements and understandings." This seems to be a nod toward the Soviet view that conference agreements concerning human contacts are not automatically self-implementing but need to be negotiated bilaterally in each case.

The French had sought to achieve progress in the area of human contacts, and the visit produced some movement in this direction. Agreement was reached on multiple exit-entry visas for journalists, along the lines of the US-Soviet accord. The Soviets also agreed—unenthusiastically, according to the French—to take under advisement a French proposal to convene a working group to discuss improved conditions for journalists.

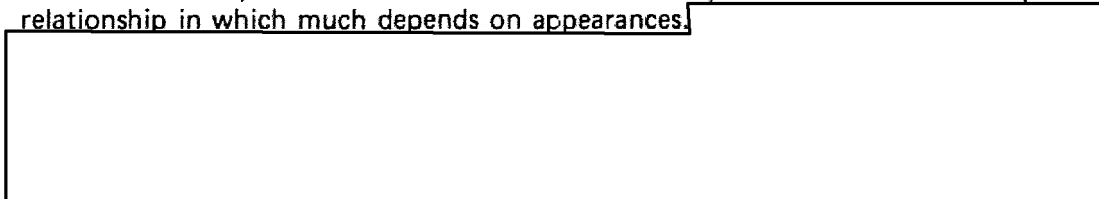
Bilateral agreements also were signed on cooperation in civil aviation and the aviation industry, tourism, and energy. These agreements had largely been decided beforehand, and they were intended mainly to show tangible results from the talks. Sizable trade agreements also were signed. Giscard said that the possibility of increasing French oil imports from the Soviet Union was discussed but that no agreements were reached.

Some mystery remains about the abrupt change in Giscard's schedule, in which the Soviets postponed from Wednesday to Friday his scheduled talks with Brezhnev and related ministerial meetings, substituting tourist activities that had been planned for Friday. A short and probably nonsubstantive meeting between the two leaders that was supposed to have taken place on Saturday was canceled.

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Brezhnev told newsmen that he had a cold which necessitated the scheduling switch. At the airport sendoff for Giscard one observer detected symptoms of a cold in Brezhnev, but the Soviet leader's overall mood was jovial. On Friday night French Foreign Minister Sauvagnargues, anxious to put to rest rumors of "blow-ups" or "snubs," attributed the postponement entirely to Brezhnev's cold.

Despite these denials, some hints of disagreement remain. At a news conference, Giscard said that there was a "difference" but not a "contradiction" between the two leaders' positions. Such differences are genuine but long-standing, and it is unlikely that the two leaders would have permitted them to disrupt a relationship in which much depends on appearances.



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USSR

The Soviet party congress scheduled for next February will be the 25th in the party's history and the third presided over by General Secretary Brezhnev. It is already beginning to occupy the attention of party figures, high and low.

Party congresses have varied greatly over the years in character and significance. The 19th Congress in 1952—the last under Stalin's leadership—laid the groundwork for a generational change among the top leaders. The groundwork did not hold up when the dictator died six months later, and his heirs were left to quarrel over Soviet policies and their own hierarchic positions.

The 20th Congress in 1956 launched Nikita Khrushchev's de-Stalinization campaign; its impact is still being felt throughout the communist movement. The 21st Congress in 1959 came and went without a ripple. The 22nd Congress in 1961, among other things, approved a visionary party program, mapping out the stages toward communism to be pursued in the following decades.

The 23rd Congress, in 1966, consolidated the position of the post-Khrushchev team and swept the Stalin problem under the rug, settling for a narrowly limited "rehabilitation" of the man who had led the party for nearly 30 years. The 24th Congress, in 1971, was keyed by pledges of continuity.

The two congresses held thus far under the current Kremlin leadership have been businesslike, as promised by the men who had ousted Khrushchev for "hare-brained schemes," and therefore have been relatively drab. The 25th Congress could well follow this pattern, but there will be pressures for change. Even if it simply offered more of the same, promises of continuity would be fragile, for another change of generations looms in the Kremlin.

The average age of the Politburo—the party's steering committee—is 71, and more than half of its members probably will leave the scene within the next few years. General Secretary Brezhnev and his unofficial deputy, Andrey Kirilenko, are approaching 70. Mikhail Suslov, the party ideologist, is 72. Premier Kosygin is 71, President Podgorny is 72, and Defense Minister Grechko is 71.

These six seniors, along with Foreign Minister Gromyko (66) and KGB Chairman Andropov (61), function as a small inner collective within the Politburo. There is little or no devolution of authority to the juniors on the Politburo.

Among the juniors—a relative term at best—there are able men already on the Politburo, as well as others waiting on the threshold. None of them has established a

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special claim to consideration as a contender for the position at the top. If the Soviets wish to achieve the first smooth succession in their history, serious collective planning will have to begin soon. There is no sign of such planning.

Brezhnev and others have shown interest in giving the 25th Congress—probably Brezhnev's last—a special character that would put their stamp on the party's future. Until this year, Brezhnev was urging approval of a 15-year economic plan (1976-1990). The drafting of such a plan would present planners with horrendous technical problems and engage the top leaders in political controversy. The idea may have been dropped; it has been mentioned publicly by a Soviet leader only once since March, and that one reference was deleted from *Pravda*.

Brezhnev is also on record with a promise that a draft of a new constitution will be published in time for the 25th Congress.

The congress will be asked to approve a new five-year plan (1976-1980). It may take up other unfinished business, such as the proposed reorganization of management in both industry and agriculture.

Each of these matters has implications for foreign and domestic policies, and bureaucratic empires are at stake. Reaching agreement in the Politburo will not be easy, and Brezhnev, the chairman of the board, will have a busy fall and winter.

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MOROCCO-SPAIN

Morocco is protesting Spain's appeal of Saturday for a meeting of the UN Security Council to discuss King Hassan's planned mass march into Spanish Sahara. The Security Council meets today to discuss Madrid's request.

A Moroccan communique accused Madrid of distorting the facts in its appeal to the UN and charged that Spain alone is responsible for the present situation. The statement denied that the planned march of 350,000 unarmed Moroccans would constitute an "invasion."

Moroccan authorities are continuing preparations for the march and claim to have recruited enough volunteers. Special trains and nearly 8,000 trucks will be used for transport. The first contingents of marchers may begin moving to assembly points in southern Morocco on Wednesday.

The march could lead to fighting with pro-independence Saharans even if the Spanish try to avoid a clash. According to press reports from Madrid, the Algerian-supported Polisario Front and the leader of the territory's general assembly have said that their followers will go to the border to stop the Moroccans. King Hassan has already warned that Moroccans will defend themselves against any non-Spanish forces. The Moroccans have 12,000-15,000 troops in the south available to intervene.

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SPAIN

General Franco is suffering from a mild attack of flu, a government source announced Saturday.

The spokesman said the illness is not considered serious, but there are rumors that he is suffering from constriction of the coronary vessels. The doctors have prescribed eight days of rest, according to a news report.

We have no confirmation of the coronary problem, but even an attack of flu for the 82-year-old Franco cannot be taken lightly. A severe attack of phlebitis in the summer of 1974 brought him close to death, but he made a remarkable recovery.

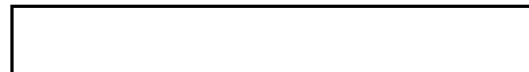
Franco's sudden illness may complicate the handling of the pressing problems of terrorism and Morocco's claim to Spanish Sahara. He has been taking an active role in decision-making in recent months, when the government has had to choose from among various courses of action.

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